SIMMER, LOUIS DRAWER 1 Artists-Z

HL 2003 085. 02422

Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Louis Zimmer

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

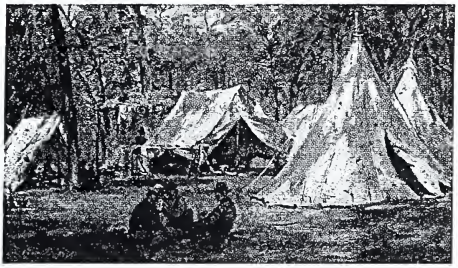
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

71 2009 085 02728

A LOST CONFEDERATE PAINTING IS DISCOVERED

HAROLD HOLZER

CONRAD WISE CHAPMAN WAS surely the most tormented—yet also the most talented—of all Confederate soldier/artists. His father, John, was a celebrated painter and patriotic Virginian who raised his son in Rome, Italy. As a child Conrad was surrounded by great art and by a passion for distant Dixie.



VALENTINE MUSEUM, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

When news of the Civil War reached Europe, the young man headed to Virginia to take up arms. Unable to reach that state, he settled for enlistment in a Kentucky regiment.

As a soldier he was less than successful, wounding *himself* in a freak, unexplained accident after the April 1862 Battle of Shiloh. He sensibly decided to lay down the rifle and take up a tool that better suited his talents: the paintbrush. He went on to paint some fine scenes of his infantry regiment's life in camp and then, after being transferred east, a memorable series of studies of the Confederate defenses of Charleston, South Carolina. Those panels now adorn an entire wall of the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia.

Chapman enjoyed little commercial success as an artist; in his later life, he was reduced to hand-tinting photographs to eke out a living. One of his works did achieve recognition during his lifetime, however. A view of his 3d Kentucky regiment encamped near Corinth, Mississippi, became famous when it was reproduced in 1871 by London printmaker Louis Zimmer as a handsome chromolithograph (bottom right) entitled "Confederate Camp Life during the Late American War."

For years, historians have wondered precisely what original Chapman painting inspired the print. The closest known rendering was the rough little oil sketch of card-playing soldiers at left. The subsequent, expanded painting that provided the basis for the rest of the lithograph remained lost—until now.

Recently, antiques dealer Leo Oak discovered the long-lost Chapma original (center) in an artifact-crowd ed shed in rural Oregon. Still stretch ed on its original Southern pin wood, the canvas is inscribed on th reverse: "Camp of the 3d Kenty. Reg (Confederate) near Corinth Miss./Ma 11, 1862/Hand Painted by C.W. Chap man Comp. 1." That date is about month after Shiloh; Chapman mad his rough sketch while he was still r covering from his wound.

Although the newly discovere painting needs some cleaning, th canvas's details remain surprising vivid. The use of light an shadow is gripping, ar the character studies a evocative. The style is di tinctively Chapman's.

The work even includes self-portrait of the haunt artist himself: the bored se try leaning against his ri at the extreme left. In pr ducing the chromolith graph, Zimmer added a s ond soldier to keep h company—evidently he f the figure Chapman h chosen to represent hims looked too lonely. **CWT**

COURTESY OF LEO OAKS

Chapman painted an oil sketch of card players in camp (top left) during his Confederate service. When he returned to Rome he made the recently discovered larger painting (above) based on the sketch. That painting, in turn, inspired Louis Zimmer's famous chromolithograph (right).

VALENTINE MUSEUM, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

ZIMMER

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
State of Indiana through the Indiana State Library

http://archive.org/details/artistsofabrahazlinc

ZIMMER, LOUIS DRAWER [illegible] Artists-Z